

SENATE BILL NO. 214

INTRODUCED BY STEINBEISSER, BALES, RIPLEY, BRENDEN, LEWIS, ZINKE, CURTISS, BLACK,
TUTVEDT, STORY, WELBORN

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT INCREASING PENALTIES FOR THEFT OF A COMMONLY DOMESTICATED HOOFED ANIMAL AND FOR ILLEGAL BRANDING OR ALTERING OR OBSCURING A BRAND; REQUIRING MANDATORY COMMUNITY SERVICE IF A PRISON SENTENCE IS DEFERRED; PROVIDING FOR FORFEITURE OF PROPERTY FOR THE THEFT OF A COMMONLY DOMESTICATED HOOFED ANIMAL AND FOR ILLEGAL BRANDING OR ALTERING OR OBSCURING A BRAND; AMENDING SECTIONS 45-2-311, 45-6-301, AND 45-6-327, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Forfeiture for theft of commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring of brand. (1) The following property is subject to criminal forfeiture under this section:

(a) money, raw materials, products, equipment, and other property of any kind that is used or intended for use in the theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327;

(b) property used or intended for use as a container for property enumerated in subsection (1)(a);

(c) except as provided in subsection (2), a conveyance, including an aircraft, vehicle, or vessel, used or intended for use to facilitate the theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327;

(d) books, records, research products and materials, formulas, microfilm, tapes, and data used or intended for use in connection with the theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327;

(e) everything of value furnished or intended to be furnished in exchange for a commonly domesticated hoofed animal in violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327 and all proceeds traceable to the exchange;

(f) money, negotiable instruments, securities, and weapons used or intended to be used to facilitate a

1 violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327;

2 (g) personal property constituting or derived from proceeds obtained directly or indirectly from theft of
3 a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or from illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation of
4 45-6-301 or 45-6-327; and

5 (h) real property, including any right, title, and interest in a lot or tract of land and any appurtenances or
6 improvements, that is directly used or intended to be used in any manner to facilitate a violation of or that is
7 derived from or maintained by proceeds resulting from the theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or
8 illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327. An owner's interest in real
9 property is not subject to criminal forfeiture by reason of an act or omission unless it is proved that the act or
10 omission was the owner's or was with the owner's express consent.

11 (2) A conveyance is not subject to criminal forfeiture under this section unless the owner or other person
12 in charge of the conveyance knowingly used the conveyance or knowingly consented to its use for the purpose
13 of theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation
14 of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327.

15 (3) Criminal forfeiture under this section of property that is encumbered by a bona fide security interest
16 is subject to that interest if the secured party did not use or consent to the use of the property in connection with
17 the theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in
18 violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327.

19 (4) Property subject to criminal forfeiture under this section may be seized under the following
20 circumstances:

21 (a) A peace officer who has probable cause to make an arrest for the theft of a commonly domesticated
22 hoofed animal or for illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327 may
23 seize a conveyance obtained with proceeds derived from the violation or used to facilitate the violation and shall
24 immediately deliver the conveyance to the peace officer's law enforcement agency to be held as evidence until
25 a criminal forfeiture is declared or a release is ordered.

26 (b) Property subject to criminal forfeiture under this section may be seized by a peace officer under a
27 search warrant issued by a court having jurisdiction over the property.

28 (c) Seizure without a warrant may be made if:

29 (i) the seizure is incident to an arrest or a search under a search warrant issued for another purpose or
30 an inspection under an administrative inspection warrant;

(ii) the property was the subject of a prior judgment in favor of the state in a criminal proceeding or a criminal forfeiture proceeding based on Title 44, chapter 12, or this section;

(iii) a peace officer has probable cause to believe that the property is directly or indirectly dangerous to health or safety; or

(iv) a peace officer has probable cause to believe that the property was used or is intended to be used during the theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand in violation of 45-6-301 or 45-6-327.

(5) A forfeiture proceeding under subsection (1) must be commenced within 45 days of the seizure of the property involved.

(6) The procedure for forfeiture proceedings in 44-12-201 through 44-12-204 applies to property seized pursuant to this section.

(7) Upon conviction, the property subject to criminal forfeiture is forfeited to the state and must be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of [section 2].

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Disposition of property and proceeds of sale. (1) If the court finds that property seized pursuant to the theft of a commonly domesticated hoofed animal or illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand was not used for the purpose charged or that the property listed in [section 1(1)] was used without the knowledge or consent of the owner, it shall order the property released to the owner of record as of the date of the seizure.

(2) If the court finds that the property was used for the purpose charged and that the property listed in [section 1(1)] was used with the knowledge or consent of the owner, the property must be disposed of as follows:

(a) If proper proof of the claim is presented at the hearing by the holder of a security interest, the court shall order the property released to the holder of the security interest if the amount due the holder of the security interest is equal to or in excess of the value of the property as of the date of seizure. If the amount due the holder of the security interest is less than the value of the property, the property, if it is sold, must be sold at public auction by the department of livestock in the same manner provided by law for the sale of property under execution or the department of livestock may return the property to the holder of the security interest without proceeding with an auction. The property may not be sold to an officer or employee of the department of livestock or to a person related to a department officer or employee by blood or marriage.

(b) If no claimant exists and the department of livestock wishes to retain the property for its official use,

1 it may do so. If the property is not to be retained, it must be sold as provided in subsection (2)(a).

2 (c) If a claimant who has presented proper proof of a claim exists and the department of livestock wishes
3 to retain the property for its official use, it may do so if it compensates the claimant in the amount of the security
4 interest outstanding at the time of the seizure.

5 (3) In making a disposition of property under this section, the court may take any action to protect the
6 rights of innocent persons.

7 (4) Whenever property is seized, forfeited, and sold under the provisions of this section, the net proceeds
8 of the sale must be distributed as follows:

9 (a) to the holders of security interests who have presented proper proof of their claims, if any, up to the
10 amount of their interests in the property; and

11 (b) the remainder, if any, to the credit of the department of livestock to be used in enforcement activities
12 related to the theft of commonly domesticated hoofed animals and illegal branding or altering or obscuring a
13 brand.

14
15 **Section 3.** Section 45-2-311, MCA, is amended to read:

16 **"45-2-311. Criminal responsibility of corporations.** (1) A corporation may be prosecuted for the
17 commission of an offense only if:

18 (a) the offense is a misdemeanor, is defined by 45-5-204, 45-6-315, 45-6-317, 45-6-318, 45-6-326,
19 ~~45-6-327~~, 45-8-113, 45-8-114, 45-8-212, 45-8-214, 82-1-201, or 82-10-104, or is defined by another statute that
20 clearly indicates a legislative purpose to impose liability on a corporation and an agent of the corporation performs
21 the conduct that is an element of the offense while acting within the scope of the agent's office or employment
22 and in behalf of the corporation, except that any limitation in the defining statute concerning the corporation's
23 accountability for certain agents or under certain circumstances is applicable; or

24 (b) the commission of the offense is authorized, requested, commanded, or performed by the board of
25 directors or by a high managerial agent who is acting within the scope of that agent's employment in behalf of
26 the corporation.

27 (2) A corporation's proof that the high managerial agent having supervisory responsibility over the
28 conduct that is the subject matter of the offense exercised due diligence to prevent the commission of the offense
29 is a defense to a prosecution for any offense to which subsection (1)(a) refers, other than an offense for which
30 absolute liability is imposed. This subsection is inapplicable if the legislative purpose of the statute defining the

1 offense is inconsistent with the provisions of this subsection.

2 (3) For the purposes of this section:

3 (a) "agent" means any director, officer, servant, employee, or other person who is authorized to act in
4 behalf of the corporation;

5 (b) "high managerial agent" means an officer of the corporation or any other agent who has a position
6 of comparable authority for the formulation of corporate policy or the supervision of subordinate employees in a
7 managerial capacity."
8

9 **Section 4.** Section 45-6-301, MCA, is amended to read:

10 **"45-6-301. Theft.** (1) A person commits the offense of theft when the person purposely or knowingly
11 obtains or exerts unauthorized control over property of the owner and:

12 (a) has the purpose of depriving the owner of the property;

13 (b) purposely or knowingly uses, conceals, or abandons the property in a manner that deprives the
14 owner of the property; or

15 (c) uses, conceals, or abandons the property knowing that the use, concealment, or abandonment
16 probably will deprive the owner of the property.

17 (2) A person commits the offense of theft when the person purposely or knowingly obtains by threat or
18 deception control over property of the owner and:

19 (a) has the purpose of depriving the owner of the property;

20 (b) purposely or knowingly uses, conceals, or abandons the property in a manner that deprives the
21 owner of the property; or

22 (c) uses, conceals, or abandons the property knowing that the use, concealment, or abandonment
23 probably will deprive the owner of the property.

24 (3) A person commits the offense of theft when the person purposely or knowingly obtains control over
25 stolen property knowing the property to have been stolen by another and:

26 (a) has the purpose of depriving the owner of the property;

27 (b) purposely or knowingly uses, conceals, or abandons the property in a manner that deprives the
28 owner of the property; or

29 (c) uses, conceals, or abandons the property knowing that the use, concealment, or abandonment
30 probably will deprive the owner of the property.

(4) A person commits the offense of theft when the person purposely or knowingly obtains or exerts unauthorized control over any part of any public assistance provided under Title 52 or 53 by a state or county agency, regardless of the original source of assistance, by means of:

- (a) a knowingly false statement, representation, or impersonation; or
- (b) a fraudulent scheme or device.

(5) A person commits the offense of theft when the person purposely or knowingly obtains or exerts or helps another obtain or exert unauthorized control over any part of any benefits provided under Title 39, chapter 71, by means of:

- (a) a knowingly false statement, representation, or impersonation; or
- (b) deception or other fraudulent action.

(6) (a) A person commits the offense of theft when the person purposely or knowingly commits insurance fraud as provided in 33-1-1202 or 33-1-1302;

(b) purposely or knowingly diverts or misappropriates insurance premiums as provided in 33-17-1102; or

(c) purposely or knowingly receives small business health insurance premium incentive payments or premium assistance payments or tax credits under Title 33, chapter 22, part 20, to which the person is not entitled.

(7) A person commits the offense of theft of property by embezzlement when, with the purpose to deprive the owner of the property, the person:

(a) purposely or knowingly obtains or exerts unauthorized control over property of the person's employer or over property entrusted to the person; or

(b) purposely or knowingly obtains by deception control over property of the person's employer or over property entrusted to the person.

(8) (a) Except as provided in subsection (8)(b), a person convicted of the offense of theft of property not exceeding \$1,000 in value shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term not to exceed 6 months, or both. A person convicted of a second offense shall be fined \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term not to exceed 6 months, or both. A person convicted of a third or subsequent offense shall be fined \$1,000 and be imprisoned in the county jail for a term of not less than 30 days or more than 6 months.

(b) (i) Except as provided in subsection (8)(c), a person convicted of the offense of theft of property

1 exceeding \$1,000 in value, ~~theft of any commonly domesticated hoofed animal~~, or theft of any amount of
2 anhydrous ammonia for the purpose of manufacturing dangerous drugs shall be fined an amount not to exceed
3 \$50,000 or be imprisoned in a state prison for a term not to exceed 10 years, or both.

4 (ii) A person convicted of the theft of any commonly domesticated hoofed animal shall be fined an amount
5 of not less than \$10,000 or more than \$50,000 or be imprisoned in a state prison for a term not to exceed 10
6 years, or both. If a prison term is deferred, the court shall order the offender to perform at least 1 year 416 HOURS
7 of community service DURING A 1-YEAR PERIOD, IN THE OFFENDER'S COUNTY OF RESIDENCE. In addition to the fine
8 and imprisonment, the offender's property is subject to criminal forfeiture pursuant to [sections 1 and 2].

9 (c) A person convicted of the offense of theft of property exceeding \$10,000 in value by embezzlement
10 shall be imprisoned in a state prison for a term of not less than 1 year or more than 10 years and may be fined
11 an amount not to exceed \$50,000. The court may, in its discretion, place the person on probation with the
12 requirement that restitution be made under terms set by the court. If the terms are not met, the required prison
13 term may be ordered.

14 (9) Amounts involved in thefts committed pursuant to a common scheme or the same transaction,
15 whether from the same person or several persons, may be aggregated in determining the value of the property."
16

17 **Section 5.** Section 45-6-327, MCA, is amended to read:

18 **"45-6-327. Illegal branding or altering or obscuring a of brand.** (1) A person commits the offense of
19 illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand if ~~he the person~~ marks or brands any commonly domesticated
20 hoofed animal or removes, covers, alters, or defaces any existing mark or brand on any commonly domesticated
21 hoofed animal with the purpose ~~to obtain or exert~~ of obtaining or exerting unauthorized control over ~~said the~~ the
22 animal or with the purpose ~~to conceal, misrepresent, transfer, or prevent~~ of concealing, misrepresenting,
23 transferring, or preventing identification of ~~said the~~ the animal.

24 (2) A person convicted of the offense of illegal branding or altering or obscuring a brand shall be
25 imprisoned in the state prison for ~~any a~~ a term not to exceed 10 years or be fined an amount of not to exceed less
26 than \$10,000 or more than \$50,000, or both. If a prison term is deferred, the court shall order the offender to
27 perform at least 1 year 416 HOURS of community service DURING A 1-YEAR PERIOD, IN THE OFFENDER'S COUNTY OF
28 RESIDENCE. In addition to the fine and imprisonment, the offender's property is subject to criminal forfeiture
29 pursuant to [sections 1 and 2]."
30

NEW SECTION. Section 6. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 and 2] are intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 45, chapter 6, part 3, and the provisions of Title 45, chapter 6, part 3, apply to [sections 1 and 2].

NEW SECTION. **Section 7. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

NEW SECTION. **Section 8. Applicability.** [This act] applies to proceedings begun on or after [the effective date of this act].

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